Mission Moment Myanmar

Love is determined . . .

Daw Aye May is a 56-year-old widow who lives alone in the village of Sar Phyu Su, 40 miles north of Yangon, Myanmar. When she lost her husband in 2019, she thought her future was gone too. But she managed to maintain a living selling herbs at market. Then came COVID-19. Restrictions curtailed public gatherings at large markets and travel, disrupting an already limited economy by reducing farmers ability to sell products in distant and larger markets.

Although Daw Aye May received some additional support from family, she knew she needed to find another way to earn money when selling herbs was no longer a possibility. Soon she learned that One Great Hour of Sharing partners through Church World Service were sharing chickens with families who had great need and training them in animal care and husbandry.

Within weeks of picking up two hens and a rooster from a hatchery delivery truck, Daw Aye May had eggs! At first, "I didn't have any idea about how to raise chickens, but just wanted to try. I just fed the chickens and let all the eggs hatch," she said. In fact, she let the first 12 eggs hatch into young chicks. Shortly afterwards, she collected another 13 eggs from the first two hens and sold 10 eggs in the village to earn $1.81. That's nearly half the official daily minimum wage of $3.53. "I was so happy as this was my first time making money from my chicken raising business," she said proudly.

Local partners sourced a local breed of hens and roosters for villagers because they are easier to raise free-range style. In less than five months, Daw Aye May had 30 hens and five roosters – with no prior experience in raising poultry. "I learned that chicken meat from the local breed earns more money." She expects to soon gather 30 eggs per day, earning up to $5.42/day in sales within a cluster of walkable villages.

The newly inspired chicken farmer shared her joy and gratitude. "I thank CWS for sparking the light of a more hopeful future for me. Honestly, I wasn't initially interested in chicken raising. Now, I want to be a poultry business woman. With a flock of 35 hens and roosters already, I will expand the flock further. My plan is to collect and sell more eggs in neighboring villages where I am allowed to travel. Also, I will use chicken manure in my home-gardening as organic fertilizer."

Daw May Aye's determination is an inspiration to anyone who hears her story. Though it would have been understandable for her to give up, she found a way to not only survive, but thrive. This new beginning is made possible by the love you share through your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing! In a time that will forever be marked by the tragedy of a global pandemic, your determined generosity makes stories like Daw May Aye's possible, showing the world once again that, even amid our most difficult struggles, "faith, hope, and love abide, these three: and the greatest of these is love."

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